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Kirkpatrick Poses Personnel Problem

A Reagan Favorite, She Faces Resistance for NSC Post

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President Reagan is determined to keep U.N. Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick in his administration, although that would confront him with a thorny personnel problem because of strong indications that the only job she will accept is national security affairs adviser.

Any attempt to put her in the National Security Council post now held by Robert C. McFarlane would prompt strong opposition from Secretary of State George P. Shultz and White House chief of staff James A. Baker III, who last year thwarted efforts by conservatives to have her take over the pivotal policy-making position.

Senior administration officials said yesterday that a decision on Kirkpatrick's status was unlikely before December and that Reagan probably would seek first to convince her to take some other job.

But, they added, Reagan's regard for Kirkpatrick is so high and the pressure from Republican conservatives to retain her services so strong that the idea of giving her the security adviser's post has not been ruled out.

The officials were vague about how this could be done without creating an uncomfortable working relationship between her and Shultz and Baker.

Some sources suggested the possibility of a compromise under which Shultz would agree to her installation at the NSC if administration moderates led by Shultz were compensated with control over a new White House post with responsibility for arms control.

Determined to leave the United Nations, Kirkpatrick has made clear that she would

like a major policy-making post, and sources familiar with her thinking said the NSC job is the only one she is likely to accept. A senior White House official, discussing Kirkpatrick's status yesterday, said: "We hope to hold on to her. She's a giant intellect."

Admiration among Republican conservatives for her feisty views moved toward adulation after her nationally televised performance at the Republican National Convention last August, when she cut her last

ties to the Democratic Party by blaming the Democrats for "the dismal period of retreat and decline" in America's world position.

The conservatives regard Kirkpatrick as crucial in the administration's internal balance of power and as an ally of such combative figures as Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, Central Intelligence

Agency Director William J. Casey and former national security affairs adviser William P. Clark, now secretary of the interior, against the more moderate wing of Shultz and Baker.

Despite this lavish praise, Kirkpatrick's celebrated feistiness and intellectual convictions have raised questions about whether she could work effectively in harness with Shultz and Baker, who both apparently will continue in office.

That is why Kirkpatrick has told friends on several occasions: "If you were to ask me where I'll be next February or March, I'd say it's most likely that I'll be in the south of France on leave from Georgetown University [where she is a professor of government] writing a book about the United Nations."

The sources said her interest in becoming national security affairs adviser stemmed not from vanity or ambition but the conviction that

after four years in the high-visibility U.N. job, it is the only position, except for the unattainable position of secretary of state, where she could effectively continue to press her views.

According to the sources, she believes that if she took a lesser job, it would be perceived as a demotion

with serious negative consequences for her influence.

Despite strong backing from administration conservatives, Kirkpatrick failed to win the national security affairs post a year ago when Clark vacated it. At that time, she was defeated by the strong opposition of Shultz and Baker; and she is still bitter about what she considers unfair rumors about her ambition during that battle.

Regarding the possibility of taking another job, Kirkpatrick, who has maintained public silence about her plans, yesterday said in a telephone interview:

"Sometime in late December after the U.N. General Assembly is concluded, I expect to sit down with the president and make my report to him. I will tell him that I'm prepared to stay on at the U.N. into next year until my successor has been picked and there has been an orderly succession.

"But I will also make clear that I'm not unhappy about the prospect

of returning to private life. As to staying in government, I would do so only if the president persuaded me that there was an opportunity to make a significant contribution to his administration in the foreign affairs field."

There have been suggestions that she might be named ambassador to France or Israel or be given a specially created post as adviser to the president.

This week, there also were rumors that she might replace Casey at the CIA.

However, the sources familiar with Kirkpatrick's views said she regarded most of these proposals as attempts to push her out of the policy-making mainstream. Sources said some administration officials had made a concerted effort to convince Kirkpatrick that she would be an ideal replacement for Evan G. Galbraith at the U.S. Embassy in Paris.

The sources also said Kirkpatrick regarded the rumors about the CIA

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as a "disinformation tactic" started by her foes on the White House staff as a way to drive a wedge between her and Casey, who intends to stay on at the CIA.

As for the idea of becoming a special presidential counselor, the sources recalled that Reagan offered her that opportunity last year after she failed to get the NSC job and that she refused it.

They predicted that if the offer were renewed, she would decline again.

Thus, the sources said, while there is no sure way of predicting what will happen when Kirkpatrick sits down to talk with Reagan, they believe that if the NSC post is unattainable, she will return to private life, seeking to maintain influence through articles and lectures and waiting to see what happens a year or two down the road when some of those who oppose her most vehemently may no longer be in the administration.